
VERMONT BRAND

STATE OF VERMONT

2005

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 define where you belong

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BRAND FOCUS REPORT

State of Vermont Brand

Presented by
Place Creative Company

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BRANDING CLEAR & SIMPLE

Clarity and simplicity earn respect in today's business landscape. As markets become more complex and crowded, a clear, focused and unique communications message is vital for the State of Vermont. The message must be simple and compelling, and delivered with consistency to build credibility and lasting resonance in the marketplace.

To get there, we must clear away all the past strategizing, advertising, collateral, and other tactical materials and focus on that little piece of "mind-share" we can own within our many audiences—that place where we connect with them and capture their attention and interest. This mind-share is something that is earned—not created—yet once we identify it, we can capitalize on it through consistent and relevant messaging.

BRAND FOCUS MEETING

This abbreviated workshop, designed as a "brainstorming" session of Q&A and discovery exercises, was a top-of-mind dialog on the direction of the State of Vermont's communications message. The following report offers a summation of our discussions.

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BRAND FOCUS

The Brand Focus Workshop took place on June 7 and 20 in Montpelier. The following people participated in one or more of these sessions:

For the State of Vermont:

Agency of Agriculture

David Lane, Deputy Secretary

VT Dept. of Tourism and Marketing

Bruce Hyde, Commissioner

Cathy Herlihy, Deputy Commissioner

Jason Aldous, Director of Communications

Agency of Administration

Steve Gold, Deputy Secretary

VT Dept. of Economic Development

Mike Quinn, Commissioner

Tom Murray, Deputy Commissioner

For Place Creative Company:

Blair Kloman - Brand Strategist

Dave Speidel - Marketing Director

Our Meeting Objectives

> Help guide the Vermont Brand communication by reaching consensus and delivering a single brand promise.

> Clarify the core values and define the overarching brand promise.

> Establish top-of-mind awareness of the Vermont name and communicate a consistent and identifiable brand — both internally (to departments and community) and externally (to visitors, influencers).

THE AUDIENCE

People do business with people. And the more we learn about the people doing the business, the smarter we are about what needs to be communicated. For the State of Vermont, there are many different "customers" because of the range of interactions. Our collaborative goal was to discover the **threads of commonality** amongst those audience members and create a concise communications message that could speak across all segments. Rather than narrow the demographic, we focused on ideas, concepts and broadly defined lifestyles.

Current Audience:

- > In-state / Residents / Homeowners / Business owners
- > Out-of-state
- > Business - small, medium, large
- > Food consumers (natural resource-based products, including non-commoditized, boutique)
- > Lifestyle Entrepreneurs
- > Tourist - turned - Business Owners

Future Audience that we want more of:

[Goal - Get on the radar as a feasible place to live and do business]

- > More of the same - tourist (cultural heritage, outdoor recreation)
- > International
- > Students - "there is nightlife"
- > "Made in Vermont" Consumers
- > All smart young people - help keep young Vermont natives here for college or returning to settle

What this means:

Though diverse, the primary audience consists of individuals and organizations who function as part of a larger process. They are looking to Vermont as a source of products, experiences, and/or a place to connect with while visiting, working or living here. We have the ability to capitalize on this by being both proactive in addressing the their needs and synchronizing the many facets of Vermont brand communication.

BRAND IMAGE

Identifying Vermont's core attributes, lays the groundwork for truly authentic and relevant brand communications. As we discussed, certain attributes can be separated as "antes" and "drivers," with drivers being the unique qualities that Vermont can own (as opposed to the antes, which are fundamental attributes that all states must have just to get in on the "game.")

Here is the list we made, with particular focus on the "drivers."

- > Scenic Beauty
- > Natural, wholesome, enviro. products
- > Accessibility
- > Tradition of quality
- > Creative / Educated
- > Distinct Sense of Place
- > Authentic / Genuine / Integrity / Friendly / creative
- > Vermont experience
- > Heritage / Community

FUTURE BRAND IDENTITY

- > STEWARDSHIP -environmental, cultural
- > ACTIVE LIFESTYLE
- > ACCESSIBILITY - of place, of people, of opportunity
- > INTEGRITY
- > SMART (Committed / engaged) PEOPLE

What this means:

By focusing on the drivers, Vermont can build its brand considerably in the current landscape—as well as begin to tap into a new audiences. A new effort is necessary both to launch the communication identity as well as continued promotion of any existing strong identity elements. Our success in building the brand relies largely on increased efforts in clearly communicating a promise and bringing the Vermont brand to life through branded materials and communications that deliver a consistent and compelling message.

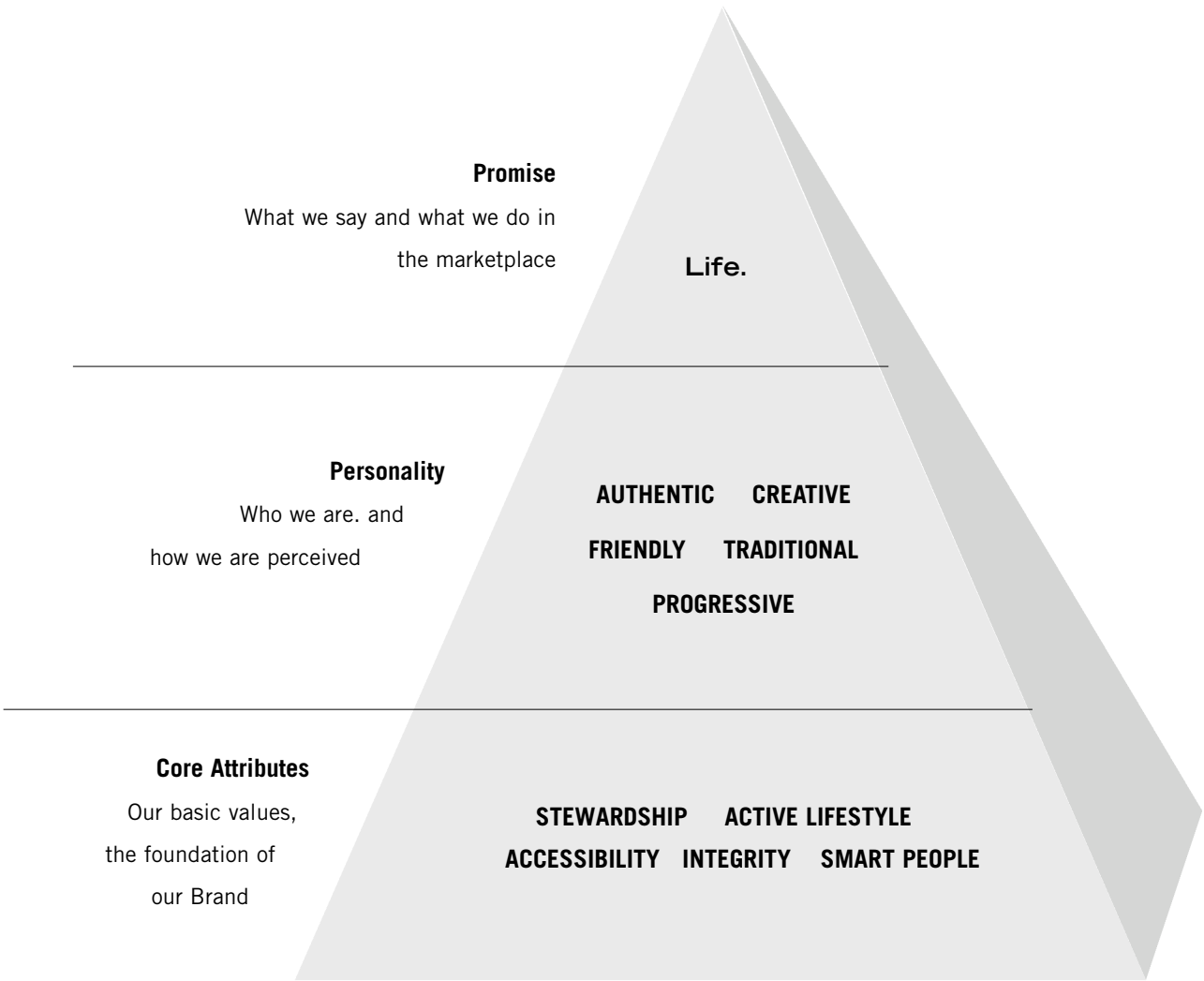
BRAND PYRAMID

Here we begin to define the core of the Vermont brand message. This is a process that simplifies and clarifies who Vermont is, what benefits it provides and why it's clearly better than the other choices. By building the Brand Pyramid, we must put words to paper in a concise and meaningful way. Just as we did with antes and drivers, we identified key words and phrases that are distinct to the Vermont brand—verbiage we can **own** in the marketplace and validate through consistent performance.

In many ways, the Brand Pyramid and its language takes the place of the more traditional "mission statement" in that it allows for more dimensionality—through Personality and Core Attributes, etc.—in the overall picture. And it also allows for more focus via the concise and memorable language of the Promise.

In our meeting, we were able to make some progress on the tiers of the pyramid—**Core Attributes, Personality, Promise**. Based on the insights gained at that time, we've continued crafting options to the Brand Promise to top off the pyramid. In essence, this is the single statement that would best characterize the brand. Ultimately it allows us all to answer the deceptively simple question—"Why Vermont?"—with authority, enthusiasm and value. Discoveries here can often lead to the language for a tag line, if appropriate.

VERMONT BRAND PYRAMID



BRAND DIMENSIONS

We initiated this process based on some of the Core Attributes that we agreed upon during the building of the Brand Pyramid. The attributes become the guideposts of the Brand Dimensions as we take the "foundation" words and turn them into actionable strategies that will bring the brand to life through the brand vehicles that include:

- > **Marketing & Branding,**
- > **Products & Service,**
- > **Our Culture.**

For example, ACTIVE LIFESTYLE is a Core Attribute. How, then, do we bring that attribute to life in terms of Marketing and Branding? Products and Services? Company Culture?

Perhaps ACTIVE LIFESTYLE is brought to life in the way the Vermont helps integrate recreation into a town plan, and provides branded statewide maps showing all recreation areas, bike paths, beaches, etc. And INTEGRITY is realized in the "Made -in-Vermont" or "Seal-of-Quality programs - valuable benchmarks for consumers and business. STEWARDSHIP could be embodied in environmental or folklife programs where people tell their stories and the are recorded for advertising,

These are just a few brief examples of how the Brand Dimensions are formulated. Many of them are already done; the goal is to continue what we're doing right and do more of what's in line with the brand. Consistency, clarity, simplicity. These are the only hard and fast rules when it comes to bringing our brand to life in a way that will resonate with the broad audience.

BRAND MATRIX

The actionable steps that can be taken could be organized in a conceptual matrix like one shown below. The matrix that results from this translates the brand platform into action that can be a scalable process to translate the brand platform into concerted action.

- > Top down or bottom up.
- > Long-term or short-term.
- > Large investment or low cost.

This helps balance the rational and the emotional aspects of the Vermont brand by applying the brand attributes to the various brand carriers (Vermont's products service, marketing and branding as well as culture).

Time did not allow us to complete this process in our meetings, but with agreed upon Brand Attributes, individual state divisions could use this format as a guide for bringing the Vermont brand to life in the functional areas of the department.

CORE ATTRIBUTES	Marketing and Branding	Products and Services	Our Culture
Stewardship	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]
Active Lifestyle	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]
Accessibility	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]
Integrity	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]
Smart People	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]	[ACTION STEPS]
BRAND PLATFORM			

NEXT STEPS

Vermont Brand Identity

- > Come to a consensus on the Brand Promise and develop a positioning line that clarifies “What Vermont means to me?”
- > Create a new logo or type font that communicates the Vermont Brand - or - finalize the existing logo and use it boldly and consistently.
- > Create a set of guidelines for identity use – logos, colors, typography and brand messaging.
- > Launch new identity internally first, then externally with coordinated campaigns.